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SUBJECT: CAMEROON JUSTICE MINISTER WELCOMES AMBASSADOR,
CONTINUED COOPERATION

¶1. (U) Summary. Cameroonian Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Justice Amadou Ali welcomed Ambassador Garvey in a September 20 courtesy call and said that continued cooperation on anti-corruption was the most important way for the USG to help Cameroon's development efforts. Ali also invited USG assistance for his efforts to reform the judicial system. End summary.

Long-time Collaborator with the USG

¶2. (U) Ambassador paid a September 20 courtesy call on Amadou Ali, Cameroon's Minister for Justice and the senior of two Vice Prime Ministers. Ali is the longest-serving member of the current cabinet, having served previously as Minister of Defense and Secretary General at the Presidency. Ali recounted his long history of collaboration with the USG. Recalling that American Ambassadors have a history of aggressively lobbying for reform, Ali acknowledged that such pressure is driven by friendship and the shared belief that Cameroon has yet to realize its full potential.

Priorities

¶3. (U) Ali outlined his ongoing efforts to unify the national legal framework, which continues to be bifurcated along Cameroon's Anglophone/Francophone cultural divide. Having passed implementing legislation on unifying the legal system and a new, unified penal code, Ali expressed hope that Cameroon's judicial system would be fully integrated within two to three years. Lamenting that the Ministry of Justice receives less than one percent of the national budget, Ali said he is lobbying for a budget increase in order to expand the number of judicial staff, enhance their training, raise their salaries, and improve the physical infrastructure of the court and penal systems. He hoped for USG support on judicial reform but said USG cooperation on anti-corruption efforts would be as important, if not more so, than traditional development projects.

¶4. (SBU) Comment. Ali was friendly, talkative and apparently eager to convey his willingness to continue a long record of close collaboration with the US Ambassador in Cameroon. Ali is perhaps our single most important ally on the anti-corruption front, and we look forward to working with him on the best way forward. Post will report septel on Ali's comments on the GRC's anti-corruption campaign. End

comment.
GARVEY